

we expect this doctor to treat the patient and to be responsible in prescribing medication.

The NASPER Act would take the guess work out of this situation. With a national electronic data bank, the doctor could simply access prescription information and determine what, if any, medication the patient should be given. The bill is consistent with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the patient would have to give his written consent before the doctor could access the data bank. Only the doctor or pharmacist who is currently treating the patient could request the information. Each request would have to be certified by the treating practitioner or pharmacist that the information is necessary for the purpose of providing medical or pharmaceutical treatment or to evaluate the need for such treatment for a bona fide current patient.

It is also important to note that as the population in our country ages, there will be more and more people who visit multiple doctors for various treatments. The NASPER Act would help doctors coordinate the medication their patient is receiving from other practitioners so that the patient does not experience an adverse medication reaction.

Currently 15 States have some type of Intra-state Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). Two additional States are currently in the pilot stage of implementing such a program. A May 2002 General Accounting Office (GAO) study found that in States where a PDMP was in place, "the presence of a PDMP helps a State reduce its illegal drug diversion . . ." The same report also states that "the existence of a PDMP within a State, however, appears to increase drug diversion activities in contiguous non-PDMP States. When States begin to monitor drugs, drug diversion activities tend to spill across boundaries to non-PDMP States." In other words, those who want to scam the system know that they will have a difficult time doing so within a particular State, so they just move the problem across State lines.

The State of Kentucky has one of the most effective PDMPs in the Nation. However, there are a number of reports that show drug diversion problems, particularly in the area of oxycontin abuse, have increased in the contiguous States of Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia due to the presence of Kentucky's PDMP. I believe the only way we can truly address this problem is by coordinating our efforts across State lines.

The NASPER Act builds on the work that has already begun in the States. Under this legislation, individual States are permitted to set up their own PDMP to the exclusion of the Federal program created by the act, as long as the States submit the information required by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to the Federal data bank. However, the NASPER Act recognizes that if we are truly going to address this problem, we need a Federal role to ensure that the States will be able to share the information across State lines. An interstate system would allow doctors to get the information they need to better serve their patients.

I would like to thank Chairman TAUZIN and the staff of the Energy and Commerce Committee for their assistance on this issue. The chairman has been very attentive to concerns that I and others have raised and I look forward to continuing to work with him on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, advances in technology have revolutionized health care delivery in this Nation. Isn't it time that we used this technology to better serve our citizens in the area of prescription drugs? I would ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: A CELEBRATION

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to appropriately draw attention to the contributions of our nation's prestigious Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and their proud tradition of educating and preparing African-Americans for the past 166 years.

This year, we celebrate these universities the week of September 14 to September 20, and I feel honored to participate in such a noble cause.

Over 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities have been established in the United States. These institutions comprise only 3 percent of all centers for higher education in the United States, but account for 30 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded to African Americans each year.

I am very proud that Bowie State University, the oldest of Maryland's four HBCUs is located in my district and I am privileged to represent the students, faculty and staff members who make great things happen on this campus. (There are three other HBCUs in MD—Morgan State in Baltimore City, Coppin State in Baltimore and the University of Maryland—Eastern Shore). Bowie State is the descendant of the first school opened by the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of Colored People in 1865. BSU rightfully boasts a number of significant and praiseworthy statistics:

First nationally in graduating African Americans with master's degrees in computer science and information sciences;

Second nationally in graduating African Americans with master's degrees in psychology;

Third nationally in graduating African Americans with master's degrees in communications; Eighth, nationally in graduating minorities with master's degrees in psychology;

Fourth among HBCUs in granting master's degrees of all disciplines;

Fourth in extramural funding in the University System of Maryland (USM) with the highest percentage of increase in the System (48.1 percent) for the 2000–2001 fiscal year.

Ninth nationally in graduating all minorities with master's degrees in communications;

Thirteenth nationally in graduating African Americans with master's degrees;

Additionally, in 1995 BSU won an 11-year, \$27 million award from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration/National Science Foundation to become one of the six national Model Institutions of excellence in science, engineering, and mathematics.

HBCUs provide a vital role in educating the next generation of our nation's leaders by extending to our students access to the best op-

portunities for personal and professional success. Most important, these schools champion the cause of equal access to education, access that is critically important during a time when fiscal constraints have burdened our state and ultimately our families, making affording higher education even more difficult for many Americans.

In fact, the Maryland Higher Education Commission recently announced that the number of Maryland college students on a waiting list for state-sponsored financial aid increased almost 50 percent this fall—at the same time, tuition and the number of college applicants has increased. Last school year 133,692 Marylanders filed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the nationwide form that determines aid eligibility. That was up from 118,537 applications from Maryland in the 2001–2002 school year, a 12 percent increase.

Many historically black institutions are facing similar financial challenges, and regrettably, for some, closing has become a reality. The federal government must realize that Historically Black Colleges do not simply provide educational opportunities and benefits to African Americans, but educating our nation's young people, regardless of race, improves the aptitude of all of our people. The entire country has gained from these fine institutions of education, and with the help of the federal government, the youth of our nation will continue to be well educated for generations to come.

Congress and the President can acknowledge this by adequately funding the programs that support the efforts of these important institutions. The House of Representatives included \$224 million in funding for the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges program and the Strengthening HBCU Graduate Institutions for fiscal year 2004. This is a \$10 million increase in funding from last year, and as a member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, I will continue to support these programs and will fight for increased funding to help them continue their mission and tradition of educating African-Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me this week in saluting the contributions of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, which have been educating students for more than 100 years. I am grateful to the nation's HBCUs for their commitment to academic excellence for all students, including low-income and educationally disadvantaged students, and am especially proud of the four HBCUs in the state of Maryland.

RECOGNITION OF ELECTRIC ENERGY, INCORPORATED

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of Electric Energy, Incorporated located in Joppa, Illinois. Electric Energy Incorporated has done an excellent job of providing energy to southern Illinois for the past fifty years.

I am very proud to have Electric Energy, Incorporated located in the 19th Congressional